

# Testimony from various historic Christian leaders regarding the question of the Mode of Baptism

(compiled and illustrated by Pastor Terry L. Reese)

**TERTULLIAN (c. AD 160-220).** “After His



**Tertullian**

resurrection He promises in a pledge to His disciples that He will send them the promise of the Father; and lastly, He commands them to baptize into the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, not into a unipersonal God.

And, indeed, it is not once only, but **three times**, that we are immersed into the three Persons, at each several mention of their Names.”

**JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, A. D. 347 407:**



**Chrysostom**

"Christ delivered to his disciples one baptism, in **three immersions** of the body, when he said unto them, ' Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost..."

**AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354-430).** "After you professed your belief, **three times** did we submerge your heads in the sacred fountain."



**Augustine**

“Rightly were you **dipped three times**, since you were baptized in the Name of the Trinity.”

## Testimony concerning the views of Methodist

founder **JOHN WESLEY (1703-91)**: “When Mr. Wesley



baptized adults professing faith in Christ, he chose to do it by **trine immersion** if the person would submit to it, **judging this to be the apostolic method**" (Moore's Life of Wesley, Vol.1, p. 425).

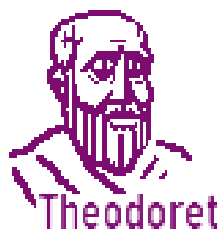
*These instructions were given by **MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)**, when he was asked for his counsel on how to baptize a particular adult female convert:*

*“As to the public act of baptism, let her be dressed in a garment, usually worn by females in baths, and be placed in a bathing tub, **up to the neck in water**; then let the baptist **dip her head three times** in the water, with the usual words: ‘I baptize you in the name of the Father,’ etc.”*



**THEODORET (A. D. 386 456)**, criticizing Eunomius, an

**Arian heretic who denied the Trinity and who was the first to introduce baptism by single immersion:**



"He (Eunomius) **subverted** the law of holy baptism, which had been **handed down from the beginning from the Lord** and

from the apostles, and made a **contrary** law, asserting that it was not necessary to immerse the candidate for baptism **thrice**, nor to mention the name of the Trinity, but to immerse once only into the death of Christ."

**CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, A. D. 315-386:** "After these things ye were led to the holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ was carried from the cross to the sepulchre. And each of you was asked whether he believed, etc.; and made that saving confession, and descended **three times** into the water and ascended again..."



**BASIL THE GREAT, AD 328-379:**  
"By **three immersions**, therefore, and by **three invocations** we administer the important ceremony of baptism..."

**CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, c., A D 150-220:** "Ye were conducted to a bath just as Christ was carried to the grave, and were **thrice immersed**..."



**JEROME, A.D. 340-420:** "We are **thrice dipped** in water that the mystery of the Trinity may appear to be but one, and therefore though we be thrice put under the water to represent the mystery of the Trinity, yet it is reputed to be but one baptism."



**AMBROSE OF MILAN (c. AD 339-397).** “Thou wast



asked, “Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?” Thou saidst, “I believe,” and didst dip, that is, thou wast buried. Again thou wast asked, “Dost thou believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in his Cross?” Thou saidst, “I believe,” and didst

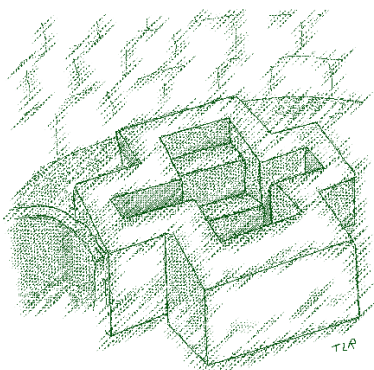
dip; therefore, thou wast also buried with Christ; for he who is buried with Christ, rises again with Christ. A third time thou was asked, “Dost thou believe also in the Holy Ghost?” Thou saidst, “I believe,” and didst **dip a third time**, that the triple confession might absolve the manifold fall of thy former life.”

**The APOSTOLIC CANONS (a collection of instructions pertaining to the governance and discipline of the churches; c. AD 4th – 5th cent.), which called for the defrocking and**



**discipline of any pastor who did not baptize by trine immersion:** “If any bishop or presbyter does not perform the one initiation with **three immersions**, but with giving one immersion only, into the death of the Lord, **let him be deposed**. For the Lord said **not**, ‘Baptize into my death,’ but, ‘Go, make disciples of

*all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*”



← **Ancient cruciform baptistry found at Avdat, Israel, for the purpose of administering baptism by trine immersion.**